

# THE Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION SINCE 1877

## 'A welcome addition'

**Central Hills Retreat grows with latest land purchase**

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

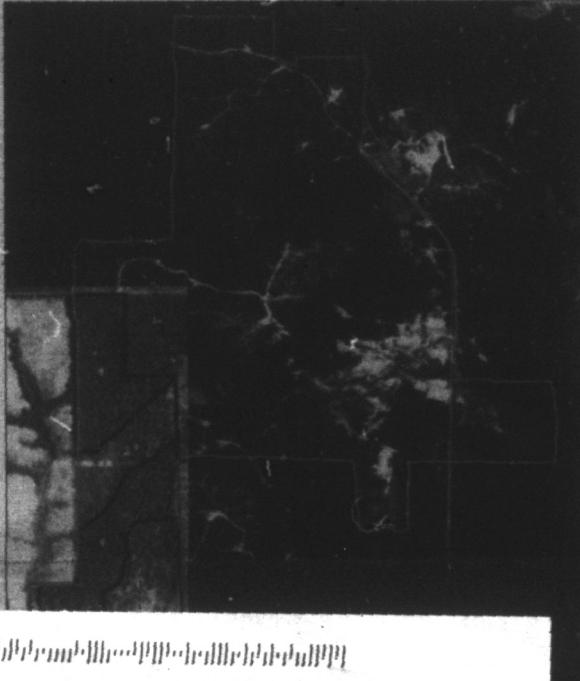
An additional 187 acres of land has been acquired adjacent to and southwest of Central Hills Retreat (CHBR) that will bring the Mississippi Baptist campground near West to nearly 908 acres and provide direct frontage to nearby Highway 19, according to Jim Futral, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson.

"This newly acquired property is a welcome addition to the grounds of Central Hills Baptist Retreat. We got the land for an excellent price, but more than that the beauty of this piece of land will ensure the future of Central Hills," Futral said.

"In addition — and significant — is the fact that this land has large frontage on Highway 19 and will allow us to develop an entryway into the grounds of Central Hills from the highway itself."

"In the future, anyone traveling on Highway 19

see CHBR on p. 11



**NEW ACQUISITION** — A total of 187 acres (outlined in black) has been added to Central Hills Retreat (outlined in red) near West, bringing the total acres now owned by the Mississippi Baptist campground to 908 acres. (MBCB photo)

## 2014 Church Compensation Survey participation urged by SBC agencies

**DALLAS (BP and local results)** — Ministers and church employees are invited to participate in the 2014 Southern Baptist Convention Church Compensation Survey, a tool used by churches of all sizes to determine fair wages and benefits.

"GuideStone continues to be an advocate for pastors and church staff, ensuring that they are compensated fairly," said O.S. Hawkins, president of GuideStone Financial Resources in Dallas. "That's why we partner with LifeWay Christian Resources and Baptist state conventions to produce this bi-annual study."

GuideStone Financial Resources, headquartered in Dallas, and LifeWay Christian Resources, headquartered in Nashville, are both agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention. GuideStone was previously known as the Annuity Board, while LifeWay was previously known as the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Survey participants will be entered in a contest to win an iPad. The survey and complete contest rules are available at [Guidestone.org/CompensationSurvey](http://Guidestone.org/CompensationSurvey).

Survey results are not reported individually. Compensation and benefit information also

can be submitted anonymously.

Each Southern Baptist church employee who participates in the survey plays a vital role in building one of the largest databases of church compensation information in the United States. Survey results provide a baseline of compensation data among similar-sized churches within each state convention.

Therefore, a higher number of participants yields a more accurate baseline of compensation data.

Al Fausch, director of business and financial administration at

see SURVEY on p. 9

## President calls for release of American Christian prisoners

**WASHINGTON (BP and local reports)** — U.S. President Barack Obama, speaking at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 6, publicly called for Iran to release Saeed Abedini and for North Korea to release Kenneth Bae, two American Christians imprisoned for their faith in nations that suppress religious freedom.

The President urged Americans to "never forget those who are persecuted today."

"We pray for Kenneth Bae, a Christian missionary who's been held in North Korea for 15 months, sentenced to 15 years of hard labor," Obama said. "His family wants him home and the United States will continue to do everything in our power to secure his release because Kenneth Bae deserves to be free."

"We pray for Pastor Saeed Abedini. He's been held in Iran for more than 18 months, sentenced to eight years in prison on charges relating to his Christian beliefs, and as we continue to work for his freedom, today, again, we call on the Iranian government to release Pastor Abedini so he can return to the loving arms of his wife and children in Idaho."

Jordan Sekulow, executive director of the American Center for Law and Justice, which has led an international effort for Abedini's release, noted that Obama raised Abedini's situation in a private phone call with Iran's president last fall, but the prayer breakfast comments marked the first time he publicly addressed the pastor's imprisonment.

"With President Obama highlighting this tragic case of religious persecution, we're hopeful that this new level of engagement by our government — President Obama publicly calling on Iran to release Pastor Saeed — will bring even more attention to the unjust treatment of a U.S. citizen who has been imprisoned for more than a year simply because of his Christian faith," Sekulow said in a statement.

Naghmeh Abedini, Saeed's wife, wrote on Facebook Feb. 6 that she wept when she heard Obama had called for

her husband's release.

"All I could see was each of you standing with us through your prayers, by calling your government officials, signing petitions, and sending the kids and [me] Bible verses and encouraging us not to give up and to continue."

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Each prayer and each voice counts."

Terri Chung, Bae's sister, who resides in the Seattle area, said their family was "delighted" to hear Obama advocate for Bae's release.

Tears sprung to our eyes as we heard the President affirm our family's pleas," Chung said in a statement at [freekennow.com](http://freekennow.com), adding that Obama's commitment "is great reassurance to our weary spirits."

The day before the prayer breakfast, the remaining members of the U.S. Congress to have survived the Korean War — Republican Rep. Howard Coble of North Carolina, Democrat Rep. John Conyers of Michigan, Republican Rep. Sam Johnson of Texas, and Democrat Rep. Charles Rangel of New York —

see RELEASE on p. 9

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## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

### A target on their backs

The time has long passed when a person could intelligently argue that alcohol advertising and marketing in the U.S. are not really aimed at young people. With the exception of well-paid toadies beholden to the alcohol industry, virtually no one would today try to explain away television commercials featuring flatulent horses, cute dogs, and beach volleyball games played by nubile youngsters as anything but a naked attempt to draw the underage populace to their product.

With the 2014 prom season gearing up around the country and many high-schoolers scheming to acquire alcohol, it would behoove us to take a look again at a study in the American Journal of Preventative Medicine by researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health's College Alcohol.

The study slams the door on the facile argument that alcohol conglomerates don't aim their advertising at young people.

"Alcohol specials, promotions, and advertisements were prevalent in the alcohol outlets around college campuses. Almost three-quarters of on-premise establishments offered specials on weekends, and almost one-half of the on-premise establishments and more than 60% of off-premise establishments provided at least one type of beer promotion. The availability of large volumes of alcohol... low sale prices, and frequent promotions and advertisements at both on- and off-premises establishments were associated with higher binge drinking rates on the college campuses," said the authors of the study.

Strange. Except for 21-year-old seniors, virtually every other college student on any campus is underage as the law applies to alcohol use. Could it be that the purveyors of alcohol are attempting to reach only the relatively small number of 21-year-olds on any given campus? Not likely. Their goal is to introduce alcohol to young people at as early an age as possible — the better to normalize alcohol use and establish lifetime drinking habits.

There simply isn't a better time to introduce kids to alcohol than

in the early years of their college experience, when many of them are still so immature and almost all of them are far away from parental and church influences for the first time in their lives.

What happens when young college students take advantage of the alcohol specials? Approximately 20% become binge drinkers who quickly consume at least 4-5 drinks at a time, according to the study. Most of them probably consume much more than the 4-5 drink standard for the study, however.

What happens to these young binge drinkers? "Binge drinking has been associated with problems such as property damage, physical injuries, unwanted sexual advances, and encounters with police. In addition, binge drinking is associated with secondhand effects such as interruption of study or sleep, having to babysit a drunken student, or being the victims of physical and sexual assault.

"With regard to any type of alcohol consumption, it is estimated that 1,400 college students die each year from alcohol-related injuries," the study reports.

Here's the reality: In order to hook as many kids as possible as early as possible, the alcohol industry is willing to sacrifice 1,400 young people each year — and that's not counting the students who receive non-fatal but life-changing injuries, or who contract incurable diseases, or who ultimately throw away their college education.

Young people have a target on their backs, placed there by the manufacturers of alcohol and the business people and politicians who defend and support the industry. Sadly, some of those defenders and supporters in Mississippi are Baptist — at least in name.

It's just the price of doing business, all in a day's work for the alcohol pushers — and to them worth every drop of blood and every mother's tear that are shed.

As the bodies of our young people pile up, we continue to tolerate alcohol in our midst and hope for a different result.

Indeed, we are an insane people.

## The post-Christian future

**A**s a Christian living in a very post-Christian San Francisco, I have found myself questioning the way the Christian community engages culture.

With the debate over gay marriage and other issues related to homosexuality, the cultural divide over abortion, the odd Christianization of war policy and gun control, and the fight for Christian symbols in school, government, media, and marketing, it seems that many Christians tend to connect the collective moral fiber of our country to our laws, politics, or media — that Christian principles somehow give us a "Christian" identity as a country.

We clearly like to be in the majority and like culture to validate our faith and moral decisions. We like to be popular, yet nothing in the Bible points to a Christian majority or cultural acceptance of our beliefs.

Rather than sweeping majorities, popular influence, and laws that line up with Scripture, we are promised to be odd, persecuted outcasts who leave all, die to all, endure all, and serve all for the cause of Christ.

We are not called to lead people to shiny churches designed to meet all their needs. Our calling is not to clean up society or legislate morality or overthrow government, or to tie tax and survivor benefits to the biblical truth of marriage. We are called simply to reach the world with the amazing love of Jesus Christ, to help reconcile a lost and disconnected world back into relationship with God through Christ.

Christianity's rise to power and cultural influence caused us to fit comfortably into culture, rather than standing out from culture. We faced little opposition to our bold assertions of our belief system. In many parts of our country, Christianity and church were entrees into business and society.

As culture began to shift from Judeo-Christian values, we reacted and began to look less and less like Jesus. We asserted our rights instead of understanding that Christianity stripped us of rights. We demanded acceptance instead of graciously enduring rejection. Some of us, meanwhile, began to redefine our Christianity to create something more palatable for society.

The rise of cultural Christianity created many Christian lives that were just like secular lives, but with added rules and a "Get Out of Hell Free" card. There is a very real possibility that many who claim to follow Christ will fall away as Christianity becomes less and less culturally acceptable.

**Guest opinion**  
with Mike Goeke



As the ranks of professing Christians become smaller, my prayer is that our smaller numbers would become more focused on shining the light of Christ in a very dark world. What if instead of fighting for the culture to validate us, we did what Jesus told us to do and turned the other cheek and loved those who hate and persecute us?

We have perhaps claimed a different moral standard, but have we really lived differently? Have we forgiven when the world says to seek revenge? Have we loved sacrificially and unconditionally when others have hated us?

Have we respected our leaders even when they do not honor our beliefs? Have we shown mercy to those both deserving and undeserving of mercy? Have we fought for all people, even those whose lives are in great contrast to biblical principles, to be treated with dignity?

The body of Christ stands before an open door of opportunity as the world moves further away from cultural Christianity. The door is open for amazing growth, hope, and testimony. The door is open for a true, living orthodoxy.

We don't follow Christ because we get tax benefits or because the Ten Commandments hang on the courthouse walls. We follow Christ because Christ is worthy of our following and because we desire to be part of the work He is doing all over the world.

Perhaps, in the end, we will see lives radically changed, and all these issues that distract us will assume their proper place, and we, fully reconciled to the living God of the universe, will succeed as God's agents to this world, walking others into the beauty that is the life reconciled to God through Christ.

**Goeke, associate pastor of First Church in San Francisco, has been in full-time ministry since leaving his law practice in 2001. He speaks and writes on issues related to life, Christianity, culture, and sexuality. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for length.**

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# Southern Baptists engaging Sochi as Olympics begin

**SOCHI, Russia (BP and local reports)** — Amid tight security, the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, commenced with impressive opening ceremonies while Baptist volunteers from across the United States arrived to be part of the international festivities.

Inside what government officials termed the "Ring of Steel" consisting of 40,000 armed Russian troops, anti-aircraft weapons, and a myriad of military surveillance tactics, the five Olympic rings welcomed thousands of athletes, fans, diplomats, and dignitaries to the Sochi Games.

Russian President Vladimir Putin ushered in the Games during the opening ceremonies at Fisht Olympic Stadium, stirring a sense of competition, camaraderie, and inspiration.

Among those present is a select group partnering under the name Engage Sochi. Their purpose is simple: to make a difference for Christ before, during, and after the 2014 Winter Olympics. Southern Baptist volunteers journeyed thousands of miles to participate, despite per-

**On the web**  
To stay up to date with Engage Sochi activities during the 2014 Winter Olympic Games, visit the Facebook page for the outreach, [Facebook.com/EngageSochi](http://Facebook.com/EngageSochi) and use its hashtag for the Games: #pray4sochi.

sistent media attention describing the potential for terrorist threats. The North

Caucasus region of Russia, in which Sochi is located, has long suffered from political unrest. Sochi is also next door to Dagestan, a restive Russian province that is home to Muslim extremists fighting for independence from Russia.

The Russian military has already thwarted several plots to violently disrupt the Olympics in Sochi.

Engage Sochi is a network of Southern Baptists seeking to create opportunities for meaningful conversations with those living and working in Sochi or who are attending the Games. Volunteers hail from across the United States, including Oklahoma, Missouri, Colorado, Georgia, and Alabama.

Scheduled to perform as part of Engage Sochi are the Singing Churchmen of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, Woman's Missionary Union drama teams, and ministry teams from Missouri and Colorado intent on sharing the love of Christ.

Volunteers engage people

throughout the community, walking in the knowledge that thousands around the world are praying for them and for Sochi during the coming weeks. "Never in our lives have we felt the prayers of people so tangibly," one volunteer said.

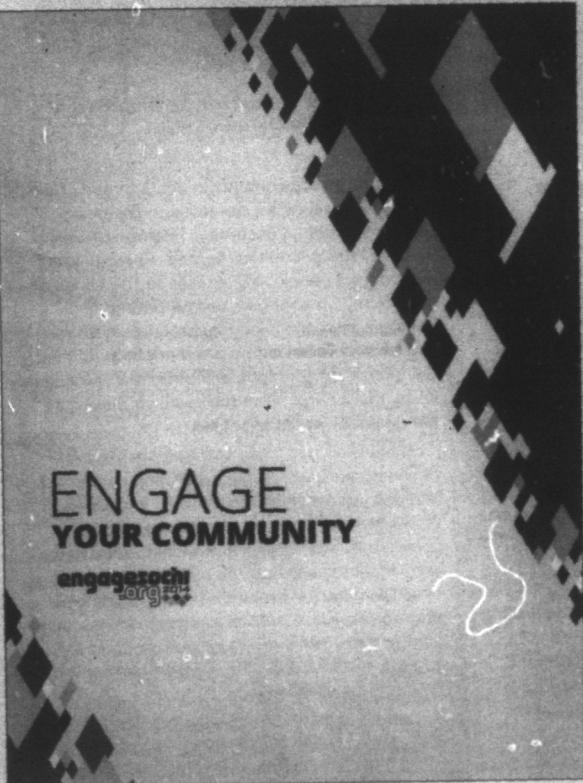
"Even tonight, a casual conversation on the train turned into a person helping us, and a really good local contact was made."

As people respond and ask questions of the Engage Sochi participants, steps are taken to ensure that once they return home they are connected with a local community of believers regardless of where they live throughout the world.

To stay up to date with Engage Sochi activities during the 2014 Winter Olympic Games, visit the Facebook page for the outreach, [Facebook.com/EngageSochi](http://Facebook.com/EngageSochi) and use its hashtag for the Games: #pray4sochi.

Evangelical churches in the region work hard to reach people with the Good News that turning to Jesus Christ offers eternal hope — hope that cannot be found in any political dogma.

Prayer had been requested for the pastors and members of the local churches to have boldness and stamina as they reach out to those around them.



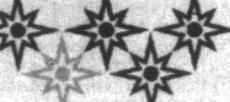
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# engage sochi .org 2014



## Olympics evangelism effort to have wide-ranging impact

**EUROPE (BP)** — Athletes from around the world have converged in Sochi, Russia, for the 22nd Olympic Winter Games. Millions across the globe will gather around their television sets to watch this event.

While it is important to use the Olympics as an opportunity to share the Gospel in the host city, it is important for Christians to use the event to spread the Gospel around their own communities, said Marc Ira Hooks, an International Mission Board (IMB) correspondent based in Europe and co-director of the Engage Sochi project.

IMB launched Engage Sochi earlier this year as an evangelism and church planting project for the 2014 Winter Olympics. The Engage Sochi team prepared a resource kit called, Engage Your Community, designed to help Christians use the Olympic Games as a way to share the Gospel regardless of their location.

"The message we have to share is so much more precious than winning a gold medal, something only a few ever get the chance to do," Hooks said. "We are talking about something that every person can have — a personal relationship with God. The Olympic colors help tell that story."

Hooks noted that the colors used in the Olympic rings are the same colors that Southern Baptists have used for years to share the Gospel. The kit contains Olympic outreach ideas, sermon outlines, and small-group lessons for every age group, as well as sheet music for the Engage Sochi theme song, Where the Sea Meets the Snow, written specifically for the project by Nashville worship leader and songwriter Jeff Bourque.

"We are very excited about this project," Hooks said. "The second the torch is lit in Sochi, people from around the world will be tuned-in

to what is happening in Sochi. What better way to start a conversation?

"This is not just a thing for churches in the States. Churches from around the world will be using these materials to help reach the people in their communities share the message of Jesus with their friends and neighbors."

The kit is also available in Russian and will be used by Russian-language churches across Russia and Europe. In addition, churches in other countries will host special Olympic-themed services and events using these materials.

To download the Engage Your Community kit, visit [engagesochi.org/resources](http://engagesochi.org/resources). An online version of the color-based evangelism presentation is currently available in English and in Russian.

For more information contact Hooks at [marc@engagesochi.org](mailto:marc@engagesochi.org).

**I**t is Heart Month here in America and Valentine's Day-love day is this week. So I thought that I would pass along to our readers some thoughts on love. First and foremost I would tell you that I am no expert on this. And beyond that I would point to a different source, and tell you that the Bible is a love book. Just to think about it brings love verses to your mind. Probably the best known verse in the Bible is John 3:16. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Beyond that listen to Jesus as He was being quizzed by some people about the greatest commandment to which He responded, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22:37-39).

The more you think about love the broader the scope of scripture becomes for your understanding and mine for when we arrive at the Love chapter, I Corinthians 13, the Apostle Paul explains that whoever we are and whatever we do, if it is not laced with love it amounts to nothing. While the Bible is a book of love, the church is an experience of love. I know that there are times that it is not. Sometimes people lose perspective, and they see us as this institution or organization where people just gather and make sounds that are supposed to be musical, say prayers that are supposed to be spiritual and listen to sermons that are supposed to be engaging. Then they leave without experiencing love. Yet Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, because you have love one to another" (John 13:35). The church is supposed to be a gathering of God's people where the atmosphere of our relationships is charged with the love of God and the love that we have one for another.

Love is a weird and wonderful thing because wherever it is, it makes a dynamic difference. Take two people

## This Weird and Wonderful Thing Called Love

who are in love, or the love of a grandparent for those special grandchildren, or the love of a grandchild for those maturing grandparents or the wonderful bonding effect and caring relationship that evolves over years in friendship. Love does amazing things. As you think about love this Valentine's Day, let me give you three thoughts about love that may help you understand what is taking place.

**Love needs to be tangible.** Love is always better seen than it is heard. Now in reality love is invisible. You have never seen a jar filled with love. You cannot go to the store and look over some of the goods and buy a carton of love. You cannot order love from LifeWay Christian Resources. And while it may have beautiful expressions of sounds, words and songs, it is still the most powerful when it is expressed and when it takes on flesh and blood and smiles, touches, or even nods caringly.

Throughout the Old Testament God told us He loved us. But love came to its highest and most magnificent expression when He sent His Son to live among us. In the midst of our faults, failures and frustrations, He showed us that He loved us. It is true that

you can say, "I love you," but it takes on its cloak of authenticity when you show that you love. It doesn't have to be Valentine's Day for you to find some tangible way to show that you love someone.

**Love needs to be flexible.** People who love seem to be wrapped up in a multiplicity of things that help them relate to those around them. They are gentle, gracious, understanding, forgiving, compassionate and caring. The hard edges of life seem to be smoothed away and the sweet caring things of life seem to be apparent everywhere.

Listen to the Apostle Paul as the Spirit of God guides him in describing love. "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails" (1 Cor. 13:4-8a). In a world that is often dominated by I want my way and I do not care about your way, it only demonstrates how little love we often have and express to one another.

**A final thought about love is that it is inexhaustible.** Now everyone needs to be the recipient and the giver of love. There are no age boundaries around love. Young, old and middle-age all need it, and all can give it. When you think about love being inexhaustible, it is true yet here is the problem. The more you share love the more love that you have to share. The more you hold on to love the less of it you have to give. Let me show you love at work anywhere you put it. For a moment set aside the chapter and verse breaks, and just listen as Paul writes to the church at Ephesus with these instructions. "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor" (Eph. 4:32-5:2).

It is amazing how much Jesus loved us, and it is even more amazing that this very day His love is as fresh, new, encouraging and life-changing as it ever was. It is inexhaustible. Now we are to turn and do likewise in loving those around us. Our love is not to include those that we just love dearly and exclude everyone else, but it is to be exhibited toward all. Jesus told His disciples, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34).

I think about that rag-tagged bunch of folks that He chose to be His disciples and I sometimes wonder how in this world He could love them. At times they were fussing and fighting, and He loved them. At other times they were frustrated and doubting, and He loved them. Likewise, He does the same for you and me and so we are to love. Share some love today and watch as God restores your soul.

The author can be contacted at [directions@mbcb.org](mailto:directions@mbcb.org).

## Staff Changes



**FIRST CHURCH, ABERDEEN,** has called Dave Dowdy as pastor, Dec., 2013. He comes from Walnut Grove Church, Walnut Grove.

### In other Staff News:

► Walter Simmons has retired from the pastorate, most recently Murphy Creek Church, Winston County, and is available for supply, interim, and revivals. He may be reached at 670 Old Hickory Rd., Grenada, MS 38901, (662) 226-6223 or 803-5485.

► Former Mississippi pastor Wesley Ellis has retired and is available for preaching, teaching, music, and others as needed. He can be contacted at 2832 Harmony Dr. SE, Brookhaven, MS 39001, (706) 238-2335, or [wesgellis@comcast.net](mailto:wesgellis@comcast.net).

### Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: [baptistrecord@mbcb.org](mailto:baptistrecord@mbcb.org).

## Revivals & Homecomings

► Skene Church, Skene: Revival, Feb. 23 - 26; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed.; 6:30 p.m.; James Messer, speaker.

# First Person: Adoption process demanding, but well worth effort

By Lynette Ezell  
Correspondent

I remember the first time I realized the love and grace of Psalm 68:6: "God sets the lonely in families." God is a builder, the master of arranging and connecting the pieces of our lives together, and this truth is clearly fleshed out in adoption.

Growing up in a small town did not lend me the model of adoption or multiracial families. In other words, I didn't bring the "know-how" to the table. God alone built our family, just as He's building yours. If God is the foundation layer and contractor, which I know He is, then He will see our families to completion.

We believe the Lord sees these little ones in this vast, fallen world and knows their every need. He created each of them in His image and for His glory, and has a purpose for each of their lives.

Although many seasons of adoption can be difficult and challenging, the mission is undeniable for those of us called to broaden our tents and surrender our families for the sake of the Gospel.

The adoption journey can prove to be long and treacherous. I understand that the road ahead can usher in discouraging days with, "What have we gotten into?" moments. When I find myself along that path, I step back and mentally simplify.

OK, so I have a child who may never grasp math or the periodic table of elements, but what I have been entrusted with is a live wire who loves to laugh and sing, who came to our family starving because of parasites, who had a mouth full of rotten teeth, and fears so deep that I laid on the floor beside her bed while she slept and begged the Lord to erase the painful memories.

It all became simple the morning she sat beside me and, with passionate tears in her chocolate eyes, asked Jesus to be her forever Savior and Lord. Isn't that the goal, that we take all our children to heaven with us?

God is building families for eternity, and He's equipping the weakest of us to do it.

Persistence and patience are tools every adoptive family needs as we navigate the often-frustrating path of adoption. In essence, we've been called to break the mold of the typical family and confidently trust that the Lord sets children in our lives as He so desires.

As we raise our children who we did not birth or maybe even did not meet until they were older, we are a picture to the world of a loving, all-powerful Savior who truly sets the lonely in families.

He alone is the Master Builder of our homes. Let's keep moving forward together.

Ezell, of Alpharetta, Ga., is volunteer director of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Adoption Fund. She and her husband Kevin, president of the SBC North American Mission Board, have six children, three of whom are adopted, each from a different nation. For more information on the adoption fund, visit [namb.net/adoption](http://namb.net/adoption).

As we raise our children who we did not birth or maybe even did not meet until they were older, we are a picture to the world of a loving, all-powerful Savior who truly sets the lonely in families.



EZELL



## Technology becoming real force in saving babies from abortion

DALLAS (BP and local reports) — Carolyn Cline calls it, "our God machine."

The director of the Downtown Dallas Pregnancy Center is referring to the group's latest ultrasound machine. Cline saw a father come in with his 17-year-old pregnant daughter recently, believing abortion to be the best option — but after seeing the ultrasound and hearing the unborn baby's heartbeat, tears ran down the man's cheeks.

"There's my grandchild," he said. Then he turned to his daughter and said, "We are going to do this together."

Few things have done more for the pro-life movement than the ultrasound. 3-D and 4-D images now allow glimpses of babies inside the womb that are so clear they can compel a future grandfather to cry.

"It brings truth and reality into the room," Cline said. "I'm so excited that science has caught up with the Bible."

Places like the Pregnancy Crisis Center of Wichita, Kan., which sees 140 clients each month, now have high-definition, big-screen televisions mounted on the wall facing exam tables. At the 10-day Nebraska state fair, Nebraska Right to Life sets up a big-screen TV throughout each day that displays 4-D videos of babies in the womb.

Ultrasounds are not alone in providing a boost to the pro-life cause. Medical advances, such as neonatal and in-utero surgery, are giving pro-life lawmakers new legislative avenues to pursue. States are passing bills outlawing abortions at 20 weeks because medical science has proven that babies at that stage can feel pain.

In 1973, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on *Roe v. Wade*, options for treating a sick baby in-utero were limited, but doctors today can perform life-saving surgery.

"OBGYNs always knew and were told that the unborn child was the second patient," said Donna Harrison, executive director of the American

Association of Pro Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists, "but on the other hand you have very powerful pro-abortion forces saying that there is no reason why we shouldn't terminate the pregnancy."

Because of these two positions, Harrison said, there are sometimes cases where doctors are trying to save a 23-week pregnancy in one room while abortionists are taking the life of a 23-week-old unborn baby in another room.

A hot topic in the abortion fight is the issue of ultrasound viewing requirements. Annual legislative attempts in Mississippi to enact ultrasound requirements have been unsuccessful, according to the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission.

In Wisconsin last year, lawmakers approved a law requiring hospital admitting privileges and ultrasound viewing 24 hours prior to the abortion. A judge has temporarily blocked its enforcement.

In North Carolina, a federal judge has thrown out the state's Woman's Right to Know Act (H.B. 854), which requires abortionists to display an ultrasound image of a woman's preborn child to her prior to an abortion and also to offer the opportunity to hear the baby's heartbeat.

Steven H. Aden, senior counsel with the Alliance Defending Freedom, in a written response, stated, "Giving women the information they need before such a weighty moral and medical decision is more important than an abortionist's bottom line. This law places the best interests of women and their preborn children first."

"Abortionists, of all people, should not be given a pass from the common-sense standard that anyone performing risky surgery fully inform the patient of what the procedure is and what it does. We expect the appeals court will reverse this decision and uphold this important law."

A total of 19 states have considered ultrasound requirements. Abortion

advocates, meanwhile, argue that an ultrasound before an abortion is unnecessary and call ultrasound viewing laws "medical rape."

During an international conference in 2007, ultrasounds were tabbed as one of the main obstacles to the growth of abortion because, as Harrison put it, "it turns the mind of the mother to the human state of the unborn baby."

Abortion advocates are actively engaging technology, particularly in Planned Parenthood pilot programs to supervise medical abortions remotely to counteract abortion clinic closures. At satellite facilities, a woman sees an abortionist by webcam. After they talk, the abortionist presses a button at his location that releases a locked drawer holding abortion drugs at the woman's location. He then instructs her to take the first abortion pill while he watches on screen.

Pro-life groups want to quell this tactic before it takes off by requiring that the abortionist be present for all procedures. Legislators from at least 11 states addressed chemical and webcam abortions last year after numerous reports of dangerous abortions in hotel rooms involving webcams and the drug RU 486.

Seven states enacted laws requiring a physician to personally administer the drug, and in Missouri, to have a follow-up appointment soon after.

For West Virginia resident Chelsea Svenson, seeing her baby on the ultrasound helped establish a relationship with her child. "There is an emotional disconnect when it is so little initially because you can't really feel your baby," Svenson said.

"Then you're listening to the baby's heartbeat, and it is so loud and fast, and you think that it is amazing that something so tiny can have a soul. It is pretty indescribable."

Used by permission from WORLD News Service. Baptist Press staff and The Baptist Record staff also contributed to this report.

## Just for the Record



FIRST CHURCH, HOLLY SPRINGS, held their annual RA Race Day. Shown are the participants and winners.



FIRST CHURCH, ABERDEEN, ordained Bruce Allen Childress, Jr., as deacon Jan. 26. Shown are pastors Dave Dowdy and Chris Thomas, Mrs. Childress, and deacons.



The Girls in Action of FIRST CHURCH, POTTS CAMP, promoted Sanctity of Human Life Sunday Jan. 29 by participating in Baby Battle Boomerang through Save A Life, with the monies collected to help mothers in crisis.



The congregation of TYRO CHURCH, SENATOBIA, dedicated its new church steeple Oct. 20, 2013, in honor of Jerry and Linda Eoff. Shown are pastor Tom Hood and the Eoffs.



PLEASANT GROVE CHURCH, LAUREL, held its annual men's pie baking competition.



The youth of GOODWATER CHURCH, MEEHAN, attended a D-Now weekend. They are shown with their leaders, Chet and Janna Nicklas.

SKENE CHURCH, SKENE, ordained Bobby Stanford and Charles Morgan as deacons Oct. 20, 2013. Shown are Stanford, pastor Keith Bolen, and Morgan.

### In other Church News:

► West McComb Church, McComb, is sponsoring Connect Now '14 Feb. 21-22, 7-9 p.m. each day. The event is designed to help young adults (high school seniors - 25) to stay committed or make commitments to their relationship with Christ. Nick Vitellaro and Brett Gholson, speakers. For more information, call (601) 249-4977 or 684-5442.

► Macedonia Church, Petal, is hosting a wild game supper Feb. 22, 6 p.m., featuring Randy Newell. Free; door prizes. For more information, call (601) 545-3110.

► Eureka Church, Sandhill, is hosting the Florida Boys in concert Feb. 27, 7 p.m.

► Union Church, Picayune, will host award-winning Christian comedian, Mutzie, Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m. Free; love offering. For more information, call (601) 798-6470.

## MS POSITIONS

STEELE BAPTIST CHURCH IN FOREST, MS, IS SEEKING A FULL TIME PASTOR/PREACHER Please send resumes to: Steele Baptist Church, c/o Glyn Edwards, 8977 Hwy 21, Forest, MS 39074 or email to charnell.sharp@at.net

PONTOTOC FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME STUDENT MINISTER. Please send resumes to Mr. Wally Henry, First Baptist Church, 31 Washington Street, Pontotoc, MS 38863.

ROSE HILL FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR. Please send resumes to 2137 CR-372 Enterprise, MS 39330 or email: dusty73@gmail.com

MT. OLIVE BAPTIST CHURCH, SMITHDALE, MS IS PRAYERFULLY SEARCHING FOR A BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC. Resumes may be emailed to joycethison@bellsouth.net or mailed to: Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Attention: Minister of Music Search Committee, 5599 Hwy 570, Smithdale, MS 39064.

GUNTER ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH IN FLORENCE, MS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC. Please send resumes to rodukes@bellsouth.net or via mail to Personnel Committee c/o Craig Dukes, 2209 Woodland Place, Florence, MS 39073.

HEBON BAPTIST CHURCH IN MERIDIAN, MS, IS LOOKING FOR A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC/WORSHIP LEADER AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY. Will be responsible for Sunday morning and evening worship. If interested, please email a resume to hebonbaptist@bellsouth.net or mail to Music Search Committee, 4785 Vimville Causeyville Rd, Meridian, MS, 39031.

EMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH OF GREENVILLE, MS IS IN SEARCH OF A FULL TIME CHILDREN'S PASTOR. Please send resumes to Emmanuel Baptist Church, Attn: Tommy Burford, 3600 Glendale Rd, Greenville, MS 38704 or email to tburdedge@yahoo.com

CENTER TERRACE BAPTIST CHURCH, CANTON, MS, IS SEEKING AN ORGANIST. Contact the church at P.O. Box 78, Canton, MS 39046 or 601-859-4186.

UNION BAPTIST CHURCH NEAR MERIDIAN, MS IS PRAYERFULLY SEARCHING FOR A PART-TIME MUSIC WORSHIP LEADER. Email your resume to aahm143@aol.com or mail to Union Baptist Church, 159 Hwy 51, Meridian, MS, 39301

PART-TIME YOUTH PASTOR SEARCH. Send resumes to: Calvary Baptist Church Attn: Youth Committee P.O. Box 86 Fulton, MS 38843

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# More sex charges forthcoming against Ala. children's minister

"As a church, we are outraged, shocked and deeply saddened by the events that have unfolded over the last few days. First and foremost, we are striving to assist any children and families that have been affected by these events. The health and [well-being] of these children is our No. 1 priority at this time."

### Highland Park Church statement

our entire community cope with this situation. Anyone with any information about this case should immediately contact the Muscle Shoals Police Department.

"Any children or families in search of counseling may contact our church office for assistance. In closing, we want to personally thank every person that has come forward. They are heroes and should be treated as such."

The Muscle Shoals Police Department picked Eddie up for questioning on Feb. 2 after the church's worship arts pastor, Jeff Beech, found two pornographic images of young males among Eddie's laptop files.

Beech and Pastor Brett Pitman had asked to see Eddie's electronic devices after a church member walked into Eddie's office in late January and witnessed a child sitting on his lap with Eddie's hands inside the child's shirt.

When questioned by police, Eddie said he was addicted to pornography and the images on his computer were down-

loaded from the Internet. The investigation was originally focused on child pornography but evidence pointed authorities to additional charges, the police said.

Eddie reportedly admitted to sexually abusing multiple members of the children's ministry and was unable to recall all of the victims. One victim said Eddie engaged in sexual acts with him at least once a month beginning in 2011 when the child was 11 years old.

Prior to his role at Highland Park Church, Eddie had served with three other churches and worked as a juvenile detention officer at the Tennessee Valley Juvenile Detention Facility in Tuscaloosa. He has two sons, and according to court documents, his wife Melissa filed for divorce Feb. 3.

Five counselors from Pathways Professional Counseling, as well as Colbert-Lauderdale Association Disaster Relief chaplains, are serving as resources to church members.

## Sanctity of human life chief concern as ERLC releases legislative agenda

**WASHINGTON (BP)** — The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), the Southern Baptist Convention's public policy entity, will promote life, religious freedom, human rights, and family this year in Congress despite "a very difficult period legislatively," ERLC President Russell D. Moore says.

ERLC released its 2014 legislative agenda Feb. 4, and can be accessed online at [erlc.com/article/legislative-agenda-for-2014](http://erlc.com/article/legislative-agenda-for-2014).

Moore, a native of Biloxi, acknowledged the challenges ERLC faces as a deeply divided Congress approaches the November elections.

Each political party controls a congressional chamber — the Democrats the U.S. Senate, and the Republicans the U.S. House of Representatives — and each party hopes to act in such a way, likely cautiously in at least some cases,

"While the environment is very toxic politically, we know God has an agenda of His own. We will seek to understand His will as we bring Southern Baptist biblical convictions to bear on the great public policy questions of our day."

The agenda begins with protecting vulnerable human beings. "Of all the areas of interest to the ERLC, the sanctity of human life is our chief concern," Moore noted. "While we are not yet at the place politically or culturally to reverse the horrific 1973 Supreme Court decisions legalizing abortion on demand, we believe some steps are possible."

The ERLC's agenda includes several measures designed to protect human life, and also includes initiatives to strengthen religious liberty, marriage, human trafficking, hunger, pornography, homosexuality, gambling, and poverty.

to do no worse than maintain that status.

"Between election year jockeying and the ongoing political rancor it will be hard to find a path forward for many of the bills we want to see become law," Moore wrote on the ERLC's website.

"While the environment is very toxic politically, we know

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## U.S. government coerced MS into Common Core

Congressmen Cochran and Wicker recently co-sponsored a resolution by Sen. Graham (SC) strongly denouncing the Obama Administration's coercion of Mississippi and other states into adopting Common Core State Standards. MS Congressional Representatives Harper, Nunnelee and Palazzo have also denounced this coercion by helping pass a bill that "prohibits coercing states into adopting specific academic standards and imposing extraneous conditions on state and school districts."

Federal coercion of Mississippi is evident. Minutes from the June 2010 meeting of the MS Board of Education (BOE) state, "the Board voted unanimously to adopt the Common Core Standards...based on finding of imminent peril to public welfare in the loss of substantial federal funds." The threatening reason?

President Obama said in early 2010 that "as a condition of receiving access to Title I [education] funds, we will ask all states to put in place a plan to adopt and certify standards that are college and career-ready in reading and math." U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, also later stated that "Beginning in 2015 [education] formula funds will be available only to states that are implementing assessments

based on college and career ready standards."

Sen. Graham stated that "Blanket education standards should not be a prerequisite for federal funding...This is simply not the way the Obama Administration should be handling education policy. Our resolution affirms that education belongs in the hands of our parents, local officials and states."

The following states have recognized problems associated with Common Core and pulled out of the assessment: AL, AK, FL, GA, IN, KS, KY, OK, PA and UT. Where are Mississippi political leaders in this debate?

Gov. Bryant, Lt. Gov. Reeves, House Speaker Gunn and Education Chairmen Sen. Tollison and Rep. Moore have not publicly opposed Common Core. Indications actually point the other direction in support of Common Core. Why would Mississippi congressional leaders oppose the federal coercion of Common Core but state leaders apparently be complicit with Common Core?

### State Coercion

The Board and the MS Department of Education (MDE) and many MS politicians are pushing and defending the implementation of Common Core. Interestingly, the



with Rob Chambers

MDE has adopted the same coercive tactics as the Obama Administration did that MS Congressional leaders have recently denounced.

In the Race to the Top grant application for Common Core, the MS Board of Education stated they were "committed to a bold leadership structure that does not waver..." and a systematic approach for accountability that will deny funding to those districts that do not implement with fidelity. The federal coercive pattern is duplicated here by the MDE and now in their policy recommendations at the local school board level.

The MDE has recently recommended a new section be added to the Public School Accountability Standards stating: "The local school board's responsibilities shall pertain to matters of setting policy and shall not interfere in the day-to-day operations of the school district that include but are

not limited to such duties as those relating to personnel and management decisions. Failure to comply shall result in the immediate downgrade of the district's accreditation status to Probation or Withdrawn as indicated in Accreditation Policy 2.5." Is this not the MS Department of Education stripping practically all power from the local school board whom local citizens elect?

Setting policy should continue to be the chief role of school boards. However, does the local school board not have the responsibility of taking action to correct failure to follow policy? If they did so, would that be considered interference? Also, what recourse would parents have if they received no help from the district? What are the unintended consequences of the voice of citizens and parents being sequestered?

### Other Concerns

Problems with the MDE are rooted in the application Gov. Barbour and the Board of Education signed that signaled the adoption of Common Core. In this binding document, the Board strongly opposed the assumption that "those kids" from high-poverty, high-needs schools don't deserve the same education as kids whose lives are lived in the security of

abundance...It is this segregation of "intellectual rigor" that MS will no longer tolerate." However, in the section "How will Mississippi emphasize STEM?" the Board's starting point was in northeast Mississippi. The Board's emphasis on STEM is a private-philanthropic partnership with the Toyota Corporation to develop an advanced secondary education training center called the Center for Professional Futures (CPF). It will serve several school districts in northeast MS. Is this "segregation by intellectual rigor"? How is this narrow emphasis on STEM equitable, especially when the Board states that "In MS, all kids deserve the same intellectually rigorous education that will change their lives in powerful ways?"

Should the MS legislature keep attempting to fund the CPF via general obligation bonds? Should they also grant the State Board of Education the authority to waive state law for certain districts in the state as in HB112? No. Visit <https://votervoice.net/CAC/Campaigns> for bills Christian Action are monitoring.

The author of this analysis, Rob Chambers, serves as consultant for the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission. He can be contacted at 601-292-3331 or [rchambers@christianaction.com](mailto:rchambers@christianaction.com).

## BIBLIOCRYPTER

COLAD HB L MNARF AD CNT ILK NT

PNGHRF WG: LDF INTD NT AP GRF, NT

IARR DGC FTBLOC VOGU AC.

BOGETOSP CITDCK-CIG: PAQ

Clue: B = P

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Psalm 40:11

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

## Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

*"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)*

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



# THE VILLAGE VIEW



**Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director**  
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## GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

NOVEMBER 2013

### MEMORIALS

Ernest Barlow Sr.  
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Cockerham  
James Baucum  
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas  
Humphreys  
Wade Beavers  
Mr. & Mrs. Jim  
Brents  
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Mr. & Mrs. Robert  
"Doc" Oakman  
Mrs. Elizabeth Blum  
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## BCV EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The BCV employs Christian, mission-minded, husband and wife teams, without dependent children or pets, to serve in the position of Houseparents. The couples must be mature Christian adults with personal integrity, character and of good reputation with standards and ethics expected of any member of The Baptist Children's Village staff.

They receive a salary with benefits and are provided a private bedroom and meals while on duty. The primary job responsibility of Houseparents is to maintain a home-like environment that models healthy, Christian family living for children and youth residents. They are the primary caregivers and help with everything from transportation and homework to laundry and meals when on duty.

Houseparent responsibilities are varied and somewhat dependent upon which campus and to which cottage the couple is assigned. However, all Houseparents need to be in good physical, mental and emotional health. They must be cooperative and comfortable working in a team environment.

To apply for the current Houseparent openings, please contact Celeste Cade at [ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com](mailto:ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com) or 601-922-2242.

A complete job description and application may be downloaded at [www.baptistchildrensvillage.com](http://www.baptistchildrensvillage.com).

## Live in Resurrection Power • John 20:15-23,26-29

Think with me about a time when you have lost a loved one or close friend to death. If the person was very close to you the death totally consumed your mind and thinking at times.

After the funeral service, the body is usually taken to the cemetery or mausoleum. I hope you are picturing in your mind one particular cemetery and the time at a loved one's interment service. You probably remember the kind words of a loving minister who comforted you. Before leaving the service, friends and family spoke to you in an effort to help you at this intense time and they wanted you to console them, as well.

Do you remember, as you followed the body to the open grave looking around to see where the grave was located and perhaps again as you left noticing the surroundings. Like me, you were probably anxious to find out when you could return after the funeral home and cemetery staffs had taken care of closing the grave and placing the flowers.

Maybe your memory was in a country church yard with no cemetery staff. Your memory may include asking your wife to hold your coat while you and the other men present took the shovels that were put nearby to cover the grave with the dirt that was left from opening the grave. Then, the women present carefully placed

the flowers on the loose ground that now covered the grave.

Depending on the time of the graveside service, you probably went back later that afternoon or early the next morning. When I have returned to the grave, I have always noticed the cut flowers were beginning to wilt. In the summer, they wilted from the sun and the heat. In colder times of the year the flowers died because they had frozen or at least gotten cold.

Going back to the grave for the first time can be filled with many emotions, thoughts, and feelings. No matter how many times you have returned to see a loved one's closed grave the emotions are full and fresh. You know what you are going to see—you imagined it in your mind's eye when you looked around to be certain you knew how to return to the tomb.

How would you feel if when you returned the grave had been reopened and the body was missing? This is what happened to Mary Magdalene that first Easter morning.

She had been with Jesus' mother when Jesus died. She knew He was dead. Probably, she had watched as Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus lovingly took Jesus' dead body down from the cross. Mary Magdalene had watched the two men put the myrrh and aloes on Jesus body and then wrap it in linen cloths according to the Jewish burial customs.

She had followed them across the garden to the new, unused tomb, just as you have followed a love one's body across the cemetery to their grave. Most likely, she had watched as the large round stone was rolled in front of the opening.

Now she had returned to the grave, the stone was rolled away, and Jesus' body was missing. Imagine how Mary Magdalene felt as she turned in great confusion and fear; and then ran for help. She ran to Peter and John yelling: "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him," John 20:2 (KJV). Peter and John ran to

check out the empty tomb and then, in dismay and confusion, went home.

"But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher, And seeth two angels . . . they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, . . .

"And when she had thus said she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. . .

"Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni," John 20:11-16 (KJV).

Mary Magdalene went immediately to tell the disciples she had seen and spoken with the risen Jesus. Then, that evening Jesus went into the locked room where the fearful disciples were hiding from the Jews. He showed them His hands and side. "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."

John stressed there was much more to help the disciples understand and believe that Jesus was risen. "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ . . . and that believing ye might have life through his name," John 20:31 (KJV).

Hicks is a member of Brandon Church, Brandon.

## How Did We Get Here...and Why? • Genesis 1:1-3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 26-27

"If we had been there walking on the wings of the wind when God created the universe, we would have stood in breathless awe as we witnessed the incomprehensible revelation of His wisdom and understanding when He spoke and brought our world into existence with the power of His Word" (Genesis, Part 1, Precept Upon Precept, p.32).

The writer of Genesis, inspired and led by the Holy Spirit, recorded that in the beginning God created the heavens and earth. Throughout Genesis 1 we see the recurring phrase, "God said." Psalm 33:6 supports this: By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

"Scripture doesn't reveal why God chose to start His creative work with a chaotic mass that was dark, formless, and empty; but the Holy Spirit, brooding over the waters, would bring order out of chaos and beauty and fullness out of emptiness" (Warren Wiersbie).

Day 1 - God said, let there be light and there was and He saw that it was good. Then He separated the light from the darkness. Did you notice that the sun and moon were not created yet and still there was light? Jesus, the light of the world, was present!

Day 2 - God spoke and stretched out the heaven (the sky) and separated the waters on the mass, placing some above the sky. God was creating an atmosphere around the earth so that plants, animals and humans could breathe and live.

Day 3 - God commanded the dry land to appear and for the waters to be gathered into one place and He called them seas. God was preparing the earth to grow food for His creation.

He spoke for the earth to sprout vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them. The earth complied and God saw that it was good. He now had created the land, the seas and the expanse of the sky. For the next 3 days of creation, He would fill those spaces.

Day 4 - God created the sun, moon, stars and planets. He assigned the sun to govern the day and the moon to govern the night.

They were to be for signs and for seasons and for days and years. Such design precision could not have occurred by accident. It is said that if we were 5% closer to the sun, the oceans would boil and evaporate, and if we were 5% further away, the oceans would freeze. And, isn't it fascinating how the pull of gravity on the earth by the sun and moon causes ocean tides? God assigned the tides to "cleanse the ocean's shores, help put oxygen into the water, and help keep the ocean's currents moving, keeping the water from becoming stagnant" (creation.com).

Day 5 - "On the fifth day of Creation Week, the earth was ready to support animal life. God had made water, soil, air, and plants and fruits for food. He had also created the sun to give light and warmth. Now God created Earth's first inhabitants—the animals that live in the sea and those that fly in the air. Once again He simply com-

manded them all to come into being, and they did" (creation.com). On this day, for the first time in the Bible, the word "bless" is used. God saw that the creatures and fowl He had created were good and He blessed them, telling them to be fruitful and multiply and to fill the skies and the seas.

Day 6 - God commanded that the earth bring forth the land animals. God saw it was good and then said, Let us make man in "Our" image, signifying a collaboration of the Godhead. Thus man was made in the image of God and was to rule over God's creation. He created them male and female and commanded them to be fruitful and multiply.

"The first thing God did for man was to bless him. Without the goodness of God's blessing, human life would be not only unbearable, but also impossible. Just as God carefully planned out and designed creation, God has carefully planned out and designed us. The only way we can ever really find out who we are is from God. The best place to find out begins in Genesis" (David Guzik).

Foster is a member of Murphy Creek Church, Louisville.

## CHBR

*cont. from p. 1*

either east or west will see that attractive entryway that welcomes them to an experience not only with nature but with our living Lord. It is a significant opportunity to continue upgrading the outstanding work that has taken place at

Central Hills," Futral said.

The new property, which was purchased for \$274,000, had been leased from the previous owners for horse trail riding.

CHBR is formally identified as the state's Royal Ambassadors (RA) campground, but year-round activities apart from RA camps have been added over the years. The

camp is administered by the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

"The newly-purchased property at CHBR gives immediate enhancement to the overall ministry of the camp," said Men's Ministry Director Jim Didlake, Men's Ministry Department Consultant Don Gann, and CHBR Manager

Jim Ray, in a joint statement.

"Because of the graciousness of the previous owners, the horseback trails and well-established road beds have already been used in the equine ministry at the camp. Now that the property has been purchased, access to the complete camp is much improved.

"This pristine area offers hiking trails and wildlife view-

ing for many to enjoy. The new property also gives flexibility to prayerful consideration of future plans and programming at CHBR," according to the joint statement.

For more information on CHBR's history and current ministries, visit [http://mbeb.org/business\\_services/camps/chbr/](http://mbeb.org/business_services/camps/chbr/).



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